

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, ENGR, BR, PA, AR
SUBJECT: PARAGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTER NOGUES VISIT TO
BRASILIA

REF: ASUNCION 0610 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. BRAZILIAN PRESS EXTENSIVELY REPORTED THE FEBRUARY 14-15 VISIT TO BRASILIA OF PARAGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTER NOGUES. NOGUES MET WITH PRESIDENT GEISEL, FONMIN SILVEIRA, MINISTER OF MINES AND ENERGY UEKI AND OTHER SENIOR ENERGY EXPERTS. THE FOREIGN MINISTERS ANNOUNCED A) THE SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT ADJUDICATING SOVEREIGNTY OVER 67 ISLANDS AND SAND BARS LOCATED ON THE BRAZIL-PARAGUAY BORDER IN THE PARAGUAY RIVER; B) THE FORMAL INSTALLATION OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION OF BRAZILIAN-PARAGUAYAN COOPERATION; AND C) A COMMITMENT BY EMBRATEL TO REPRESENT ANTELCO OF PARAGUAY AT THE INTELSAT. END SUMMARY

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2. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE PRESS SPECULATION ABOUT THE REASONS FOR NOGUES' SUDDEN VISIT, BUT REPORTING EXCLUSIVELY ON FOREIGN MINISTRY INFORMATION THAT DISCUSSIONS CENTERED AROUND CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS ON HYDROELECTRIC ENERGY QUESTIONS INVOLVING THE TWO COUNTRIES. SILVEIRA SAID NOGUES TELEPHONED HIM ON FEBRUARY 10 TO SAY HE WOULD ARRIVE IN BRASILIA ON

FEBRUARY 14. SILVEIRA TOLD THE PRESS AT THE TIME THAT HE NEITHER KNEW NOGUES' REASONS FOR THE SUDDENNESS OF HIS VISIT, NOR DID HE ASK.

3. NOGUES CHARACTERIZED THE VISIT TO JOURNALISTS AS A NORMAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE MUTUAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS WHEN ISSUES OF COMMON INTEREST ARISE. IN A JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH SILVEIRA FOLLOWING THEIR MEETING ON FEBRUARY 14, NOGUES DENIED HAVING BROUGHT ANY SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE GOB. HOWEVER, WHEN PRESSED BY JOURNALISTS, SILVEIRA FINALLY TURNED TO HIS COLLEAGUE SAYING, "LET'S SPEAK THE TRUTH..." AND CONFIRMED THAT DISCUSSION OF BRAZILIAN FINANCING OF THE RIO MONDAY DAM HAD COME UP, BUT THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN MADE. BOTH JORNAL DO BRAZIL AND O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO REPORTED THAT NOGUES HAD REQUESTED THE RIO MONDAY DAM FINANCING IN RETURN FOR A PARAGUAYAN POSITION MORE FAVORABLE TO BRAZIL IN THE NEXT TRIPARTITE MEETING ON PARANA HYDROELECTRIC DEVELOPMENT.

4. ON FEBRUARY 14, IRRITATED BY A JOURNALIST'S QUESTION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE VISIT WAS ANOTHER OF PARAGUAY'S PENDULUM MOVES IN ITS POLICY VIS-A-VIS BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA, NOGUES SAID PARAGUAY IS PUTTING THE PENDULUM ASIDE. HE ADMITTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE PROBABLY WILL VISIT BUENOS AIRES BEFORE THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEXT TRIPARTITE MEETING, A POINT WHICH HE CONFIRMED TO JOURNALISTS ON FEBRUARY 15.

5. REGARDING THE NEXT TRIPARTITE MEETING, FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN LUIS LAMPREIA TOLD JOURNALISTS THAT THE TWO MINISTERS HAD EXPRESSED THEIR DECISION TO ATTEND WITH "A SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING AND GOOD WILL." HE SAID THE MEETING WILL PROBABLY NOT TAKE PLACE BEFORE PRESIDENT GEISEL'S MARCH 10 RETURN FROM HIS TRIP TO WEST GERMANY.

6. IN AN ALLEGORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING, NOTED DIPLOMATIC COLUMNIST CARLOS CONDE USED THE ANALOGY OF PATCHING UP A LOVER'S QUARREL (THE CYCLE DISPUTE) AND SHOWING THE THIRD PARTY (ARGENTINA) THAT DESPITE LITTLE TIFFS, RELATIONS BETWEEN BRAZIL AND PARAGUAY ARE PERMANENT AND STRONG. NOGUES, ACCORDING TO CONDE, ACTED THE PART OF THE ERRANT LOVER WHO HAD PRESSED TOO HARD (TO THE POINT OF BLACKMAIL) AND NOW WANTED TO MAKE UP, WHILE BRAZIL GENEROUSLY ACCEPTED HIS "APOLOGY" AND MADE CLEAR WITH NOGUES' ACQUIESCENCE, THAT ITAIPU WAS A REALITY WHILE CORPUS IS ONLY A GLEAM IN ITS RIVAL'S EYE.

7. COMMENT: THERE HAS BEEN NO HINT THAT NOGUES'
VISIT WAS FOR ANY PURPOSE OTHER THAN THAT
ATTRIBUTED TO IT IN PRESS COVERAGE.
CRIMMINS

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